

Senate, and I am not prepared to accept the abdication of these traditions for the purpose of political expediency for the majority party.

In the 110th Congress, the majority leader used this tactic to block Republican amendments on 16 different occasions. Important legislation such as FAA reauthorization, climate change legislation, an energy speculation legislation and energy speculation legislation were all derailed because the majority leader's decision to deviate from regular order and deny minority participation in the debate.

Mr. President, as my colleagues have mentioned, it has been over 120 days since a Republican amendment has received consideration on the floor. It is my hope that the Senate will return to fair procedures for debate, which have well served this proud institution since its inception.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 22 AND S. 181

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 12 noon tomorrow, Thursday, January 15, all postclosure time be considered yielded back except for 10 minutes to be equally divided and controlled between Senators BINGAMAN and COBURN or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of that time, the pending amendments be withdrawn, that the managers' amendments which have been cleared by the leaders and managers be in order, and that if cleared, the amendments be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be read a third time and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the bill; that upon passage, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table; and the Senate then vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to S. 181.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we are trying to work out a time agreement as to how much debate is necessary on the consideration of the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act.

We understand statutorily there is 10 hours. We will finish this tomorrow. We will have a vote on this tomorrow. If the people want to use all the 10 hours, we will vote when the 10 hours is up.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period for the transaction of morning business with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO TOM WATSON

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a well-respected Kentuckian, Mr. Tom Watson. Throughout his life, Mr. Watson has contributed immensely to Owensboro and to the Commonwealth.

Recently the Messenger-Inquirer in Owensboro, KY., published a story about Tom and his work as mayor of Owensboro. Throughout his career as a public servant, Tom has worked hard to give back to the community that he loves so dearly. I have worked closely with Tom over my career and have seen firsthand his dedication to the people of Owensboro.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Mayor Watson and wish him the very best as he embarks on new challenges. I further ask unanimous consent that the full article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer, Dec. 19, 2008]

WATSON BIDS FAREWELL

(By Owen Covington)

Owensboro Mayor Tom Watson closed out his term Thursday night in the lobby of the RiverPark Center, just yards away from where work has begun on a \$37 million river walk for which he helped secure funding.

The farewell reception attended by dozens of friends, families and colleagues was just two blocks away from The Commerce Center, a "one-stop-shop" for business and economic development that became a reality at Watson's urging.

"I, for one, look forward to what he'll do next," City Commissioner David Johnson told the crowd. "Everything he does is special, and he does it well and he does it with a passion."

This week, Watson talked with the Messenger-Inquirer about his four years in office and said he had no regrets about his decision to leave city government.

"I'm just happy I had a chance to serve, and I'm humbled that I made it through four years," Watson said.

UNIFIED GOVERNMENT

Watson jumped in the mayoral race in 2004 as a former chairman of the Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce who had built a successful prosthetics and orthotics business with offices in Owensboro and Evansville.

Central to Watson's campaign was a drive for unified government, a push to bring city and county government under one entity to "speak with one voice."

That push took Watson to Frankfort in 2006 when he helped lobby support for a bill that would put cities and county on a more even footing as they looked at unified government.

That bill became law, and Watson and the commission adopted an ordinance in early

2007 to create a commission to study merger, but inaction by Daviess Fiscal Court meant Watson's merger push went no further.

"I feel good we tried, but it didn't work out," Watson said. "It was something you've got to try to do."

Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce President Jody Wassmer said Watson's election in 2004 is evidence that the issue is one that will not go away.

"I think we've been able to move some things to the forefront that will pay off in future administrations," Wassmer said. "I think Tom will probably be known as the man that brought government merger back to the forefront."

At Thursday night's reception, Watson was made an honorary judge-executive by Daviess County Judge-Executive Reid Haire, with Haire noting with a smile that the title was probably something the mayor had "lusted for" in the past.

"We have worked well together," Haire told Watson.

STATE, FEDERAL ATTENTION

As mayor, Watson was able to use his connections with state and federal elected officials to help bring the community notice when in the past it had been overlooked.

"I think one of his greatest strengths was the relationships that he developed with state and federal officials, and those efforts brought Owensboro an unprecedented amount of state and federal funding," said former City Manager Bob Whitmer, who served for three of Watson's four years.

U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell said during a phone interview Thursday that Watson is responsible for making him realize how important riverfront development was to the community.

"He had a lot to do in getting me even more interested and enthusiastic about the future of the Owensboro riverfront," McConnell said. "Tom deserves a lot of credit for pushing that project, believing it was important and believing it would transform the city."

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Just months after taking office, Watson along with Haire unveiled a "white paper" that presented a plan with a broader look at economic development efforts and resulted in a more coordinated effort by the community.

The paper also led to the creation of the separate Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corp. and The Commerce Center, which is now home to EDC, the chamber, the office of Downtown Development Director Fred Reeves and the Owensboro Metropolitan Planning Commission.

"I certainly think he and the judge presented and articulated a vision about how they wanted economic development to be a little more streamlined," said Nick Brake, EDC president and CEO. "He had some real strong ideas about doing some things much differently than what we've done in the past."

Thursday night, EDC board chairman Darrell Higginbotham presented Watson with a framed copy of the cover of the "white paper" and said a duplicate will be hung in the EDC's offices.

"Your vision for The Commerce Center is a reality today," Higginbotham told the mayor.

"MAN OF GREAT ENERGY"

Commissioner Al Mattingly Jr. noted Thursday night that he got to know Watson as the two squared off in the mayoral election in 2004 and has seen the sacrifices that Watson has made as mayor.

"I know of no other man in the city of Owensboro that is as compassionate, is as